

BRIEFS

'EDITING' HUMAN DNA WORRIES BIOETHICIST

NASHVILLE (BP) — For the first time ever, scientists have successfully edited the DNA of human embryos, but Southwestern Seminary vice-president and bioethicist Charles Patrick says the research in question was unethical for its destruction of embryos and raises moral questions about genetic engineering. The research, published Aug. 2 in the journal *Nature*, used a gene-editing tool to correct in 131 human embryos a genetic mutation that causes a potentially fatal heart condition. The embryos were purposefully created with the mutation, and then destroyed following the experiment. "The embryos were genetically altered, tested and then disposed of. This type of experimentation is morally wrong based on biblical truth," argues Patrick, a former research scientist at M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas, who holds a doctorate in chemical and biochemical engineering. Researchers argue continued experimentation with human embryos could lead to the avoidance of 10,000 or more inherited medical conditions.

ABEDINI'S CO-WORKER RELEASED IN TEHRAN

TEHRAN, Iran (BP) — Ailing Christian convert Maryam Naghash Zargaran was released Aug. 1 from Evin prison in Tehran, where she had been held under harsh conditions for four years because of her Christian faith, World Watch Monitor reported Aug. 2. The sentence for the 39-year-old single mother was scheduled to end July 28 but she was held additional days without explanation. Arrested in January 2013 for her work with Iranian house church pastor and U.S. citizen Saeed Abedini, she was charged with propagating against the Islamic regime and colluding to undermine national security, according to earlier reports. Abedini was released from the same prison in January of last year.

SUPER SUMMER 2017



GOING DEEPER — Students at 2017 Super Summer July 17-21 at Baptist-affiliated Mississippi College in Clinton are divided into family groups for times of intense Bible study and relationship-building. (BP special photo)

Students tapped for leadership

By Tony Martin
Associate Editor

Young people with a special heart for Christ attended the 2017 Super Summer session on the campus of Mississippi College in Clinton on July 17-21.

The training event, open to students who have finished the

eighth grade, has a rigorous application process to ensure that only the most serious students of the Christian faith are chosen to attend. This year, 973 students participated, backed up by 241 adult team leaders and service staff and 100 adult chaperones from the churches represented by the participating young people.

Super Summer is a discipleship-oriented camp sponsored by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) and made possible by gifts to the Mississippi Cooperative Program. The goal of Super Summer is two-fold: to provide quantitative spiritual

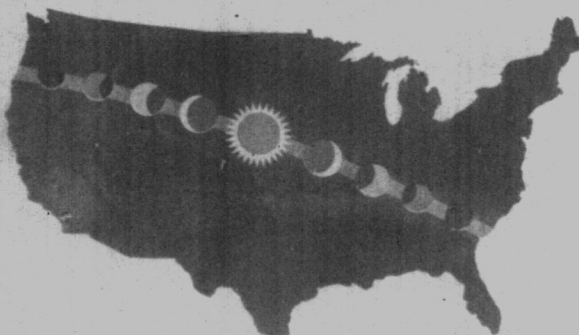
see SUPER on p. 10

Churches using eclipse for Gospel witness

NASHVILLE (BP and local reports) — When the sun goes dark Aug. 21 during a total solar eclipse, churches from Oregon to South Carolina will use the event as an opportunity to illumine their communities with the Gospel.

The first total eclipse visible from within U.S. boundaries since 1979, this month's cosmic event will occur when the moon passes between the sun and the earth and blocks the sun, according to NASA's total eclipse website.

Everyone in the contiguous U.S., which includes Mississippi, will be able to see at least a partial eclipse. The 70-mile-wide "path of totality," inside which the eclipse will be complete, will pass through 14 states but Mississippi is not among those areas.



Millions are expected to gather to view the eclipse, and churches in the path of totality are planning an array of outreach events.

In Casper, Wy., Mountain View Church and College

Heights Church have partnered with Child Evangelism Fellowship of Central Wyoming to purchase copies of a DVD titled, *God of Wonders*, which

see ECLIPSE on p. 7

MC's Royce announces upcoming retirement

CLINTON (Special) — Mississippi College (MC) President Lee G. Royce, 65, announced Aug. 7 that he will be retiring at the end of the Baptist-affiliated school's academic year.

"This morning I shared with the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees my intention to retire at the end of this academic year, May 2018. I appreciate their great and continuing support and encouragement to remain in service, but Rhoda and I have reached the stage in life that calls us toward retirement," Royce wrote in a letter that began, "Dear MC Family,"

"We love MC and its people and have given our full devotion. Though leading this university continues to be the greatest honor of my life, the time has come for new, younger, more energetic leadership to guide this great institution toward its bicentennial in 2026," the 15-year MC president wrote.

see ROYCE on p. 10



ROYCE

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From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

Ready to pay up?

Have you heard? Procter and Gamble is full of Satan worshipers. The company president said so, on television! Don't believe it? Just look at their logo!

A statement similar to that a few years ago cost four Utah residents \$19.25 million. That's the amount Procter and Gamble, the nation's largest consumer products company, was awarded by a federal jury in Salt Lake City. Unless you have a similar amount of money from which you don't mind soon being parted, perhaps you should take heed.

First of all, the age-old rumor about Satanism, Procter and Gamble, and its famous moon-and-stars logo is a lie. Pure and simple. If you repeat it, you're a liar. If you're a Christian and you repeat it, you'd better check up on what the Bible has to say about false witness.

The mess in Utah began when Randy L. Haugen circulated another person's Satanism rumor about Procter and Gamble through an automated phone message system. As distribution of the rumor multiplied beyond anything Haugen could have possibly imagined, a version of it inevitably turned up at Procter and Gamble headquarters in Cincinnati, Oh.

Companies take their public image seriously, and especially so at Procter and Gamble. "This is about protecting our reputation," Jim Johnson, Procter and Gamble's chief legal counsel at the time, told Associated Press. Another rumor that never seems to die is the old saw that the famed atheist Madalyn Murray O'Hair is working to get all Christian programming removed from television. Again, not true. Such a feat would be hard to accomplish from the grave, where her remains have resided since she was murdered in 1995.

The latest variation of the endless O'Hair tale involves James Dobson, founder of Focus on the Family and now retired. So rampant was that rumor that the Focus on the Family web site carried a special disclaimer that

Dobson and Focus on the Family were not involved in any way in authenticating and distributing the O'Hair rumor.

Simply put, you can't believe everything you hear and read, especially on the Internet. It is a rare week that the offices of The Baptist Record fail to receive a frantic e-mail or phone call about the latest such threat to Christianity. All of them — all — turn out to be nothing more than rumors that are inaccurate at best.

Christians should be smarter than that. It does not elevate our Kingdom work nor glorify our Savior to spread baseless rumors and indulge ear-tickling lies. Such behavior actually diminishes our witness by proving that we're no different than the world when it comes to truth, gossip, and rumor-mongering.

This is especially the case when there are so many ways open to us to check out these rumors. The first way is to visit the company's web site or call their toll-free customer service telephone number. Chances are, you won't be the first call they receive that day.

Secondly, there are many good Internet sites (not necessarily Christian) that research and refute such rumors. Two such sites are snopes.com, and urbanlegends.about.com. Anyone with a computer and two minutes of free time can avail themselves of these free services.

Thirdly, the mass media are frequently full of articles and reports that explode these rumors. All we need to do is pay attention.

Don't fall for rumors, some of which are unmistakably designed and promulgated by detractors of our faith with the intention of making Christians look bad. Too, any amount of time we devote to such fruitless activities takes away from the time we could be accomplishing Kingdom work.

If we're not focused on Jesus and Kingdom work, then why are we Christians?

Editor's note: Updated and reprinted from an earlier issue of The Baptist Record.

Aroma of the Soul

Why did you come here tonight?" I inquired. "The man says he does not know," the translator said after a brief exchange with the trembling Muslim man.

No longer able to suppress both tears and a smile, he explained that the three-block walk from his office to the parking lot in this Middle Eastern country took him by the front of the building each week. Each time he passed by, he said, there was an overwhelming sense of peace.

"It is like when one passes by a home where great aromatic food is being prepared, and you pause on the street to take it in for a moment," he explained, "but this I do not smell with my nose. I feel it in my soul!" he exclaimed through tears while pressing his hands on his belly and chest.

His short, suppressed sobs echoed in the back of the old cathedral. "I had to get closer — I had to come see," he said. Looking him in the eye, I placed my hand on his shoulder and whispered, "The Lord is good."

Two men lovingly directed him to a seat where their families while I made my way to the front row, thanking the Lord for the rare opportunity to proclaim His Word in the first and only government-sanctioned Baptist church in this entire country. Strategically placed by God's hand in a city five times the population of the state of Arkansas, this church is less than a year old yet runs about 120 in attendance and has baptized more than 60 since January.

Though sanctioned by the government, they face the possibility of Islamic terrorist activity. No doubt, their rapid growth is drawing attention. Nobody alive today remembers when the 300-year-old Anglican cathedral had this many people sitting on the old wooden pews.

Following a half-hour of passionate prayer, singing, and Scripture read-



Guest opinion

with Eric W. Ramsey

ing, I preached for 30 minutes. The altar call invitation lasted another 30 minutes as believers knelt and prayed throughout the entire room. One Muslim man (not the one I met prior to the service) professed faith in Jesus Christ. Dozens lined down the aisle waiting for the pastor or a church leader to pray for them.

When the service ended, everyone stayed for hot tea and cookies. For another hour, believers encouraged one another, prayed for one another, laughed, cried, and shared personal stories about how Jesus was working in their lives.

This church has no programs to promote. There are no church shirts, coffee mugs, or keychains. The church does not have a website, Facebook account, Instagram page, or blog. Not even a church sign.

They are devouring God's Word, passionately worshipping Him, praying for one another, experiencing true Holy Spirit-joined fellowship, and boldly living out their faith in a hostile environment — and passersby can sense the aroma of true peace. Oh, what we can learn!

Ramsey is evangelism/mission strategist and associate pastor at First Church in Fort Smith, Ar. This column first appeared in the Arkansas Baptist News (arkansasbaptist.org/news), newjournal of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, and appears here courtesy of Baptist Press. Edited for style.

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BAPTISTS

VOLUME 111 • NUMBER 31 • ISSN 0005-5778
Published weekly except weeks of July 4 and Christmas by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, 515 Mississippi Street, Jackson, MS 39201. Subscription \$11.99 per year payable in advance. Economy plans available for cooperating Mississippi churches. Periodicals postage paid at Jackson, MS. Member, Association of State Baptist Papers. Deadlines: News items — one calendar week prior to requested publication date. Advertising — two calendar weeks prior to requested publication date. All submissions are subject to editing.

Statistics released on 2017 SBC annual meeting

PHOENIX (BP) — Data compiled following the 2017 Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting in Phoenix indicates more messengers than 2011, the last time the convention was held in Phoenix, and a net annual meeting cost reduction of some \$800,000 since that time.

Registration

A total of 5,015 messengers attended the 2017 Phoenix annual meeting, falling short of the 2016 annual meeting messenger count of 7,321, registration secretary Don Currence, minister of children and administration at First Church of Ozark, Mo., has announced.

However, registration exceeded the 2011 annual meeting in Phoenix where 4,852 messengers attended.

In 2017, messengers were sent from 2,230 churches in 47 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. Churches in Maine, North Dakota, and Rhode Island sent no messengers. Including guests, total registered attendance at the annual meeting and related events was 9,315, down from 12,138 last year.

Most messengers, 3,219, were male, and 3,071 of them were ordained. Only 743 messengers, 14.8% of those registered, completed the registration survey. Of those, 351 were senior pastors and 41 were the wives of senior pastors, according to surveys submitted.

By age, 32 of those who submitted surveys were 18-29, compared to 126 between 30-39; 127 between 40-49; 215 between 50-59; and 243 ages 60 and above.

Cost reduction

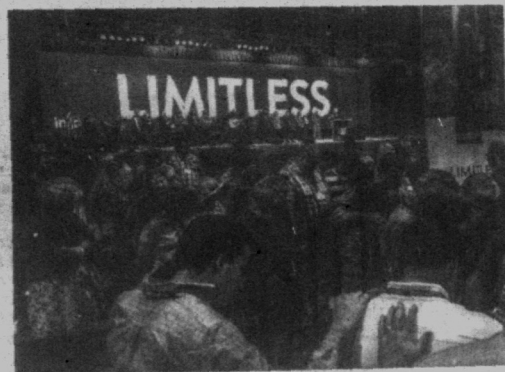
Convention manager Bill Townes told Baptist Press the 2017 annual meeting's net cost should be finalized later this month, but he did estimate a "similar" total to previous years: \$130,004 in 2015, and \$146,070 in 2016. Those figures represent a reduction of approximately \$800,000 since the high water mark in 2011.

SBC Executive Committee president and CEO, Frank S. Page, "directed the convention finance office to analyze and evaluate the costs associated with the SBC annual meeting each year to see where we could reduce our costs and also to ensure that we keep costs affordable for attendees," said Townes, SBC Executive Committee vice president for convention finance in Nashville.

That direction to look at every expense in detail resulted in making some significant



RAISING PRAISE — Steve Gaines (arms uplifted), president of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and senior pastor of Bellevue Church in suburban Memphis, helps lead worship during the SBC's 2017 annual meeting in June in Phoenix. Gaines was elected by messengers from SBC churches attending the annual meeting to a second term as SBC president. (BP photo)



(AT LEFT) NEW MISSIONARIES — Messengers to the 2017 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Phoenix pray for 31 new International Mission Board (IMB) missionaries as they are commissioned in the Phoenix Convention Center. "Southern Baptists, this is part of, if not the primary reason we came together in the first place," said IMB President David Platt at the time. (BP photo)



(AT RIGHT) PREACHING THE WORD — H.B. Charles Jr., pastor of Shiloh Metropolitan Church in Jacksonville, Fla., preaches from Hebrews 4:14-16 during the June 14 afternoon session of the 2017 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting at the Phoenix Convention Center immediately prior to the annual meeting. Charles was elected to serve as the first African-American president of the SBC Pastors Conference. (BP photo)

cant changes and a lot of small ones that have greatly reduced the net cost of our SBC annual meeting," Townes added in written comments.

Among cost reductions:

- Annual meetings no longer feature carpet in the aisles of the main hall, a \$25,000 annual savings.

- The SBC Pastors' Conference, conducted immediately prior to each annual meeting in the same location, reimburses the convention \$100,000 for use of the meeting hall, up from \$38,000 per year from 1992-2011.

- The exhibit hall has expanded from approximately 50 exhibitors through 2012 to 167 in Phoenix, with an accompanying increase of revenue from exhibitor fees.

An updated exhibitor policy "gives priority to our SBC entities/organizations, but also allows other approved vendors that do not conflict with the ministries of Southern Baptists," Townes said.

- The convention has purchased computer monitors, laptops, and electrical cords to reuse every year rather than renting from each convention center.

- The convention began contracting with LifeWay Media in 2014 to coordinate both the audio and visual aspects of the meeting.

"Every expense is reviewed, analyzed, and documented to ensure that we are being the best stewards possible," Townes pointed out.

Diversity

Individuals elected to the 2018 SBC Committee on Nominations and those elected to SBC boards and other convention committees represented

an increasingly diverse array of ethnicities and churches of various sizes.

Committee on Nominations chairman Jim Richards, executive director of Southern Baptists of Texas Convention in Dallas, noted the 2017 Committee on Nominations was one of the "most ethnically diverse committees ever."

The committee's diversity led it to propose a slate of nominees that was 14% non-Anglo.

According to SBC governing documents, the convention president appoints the Committee on Committees, which nominates members of the following year's Committee on Nominations for messenger approval.

The Committee on Nominations nominates Southern Baptists to serve on SBC boards and committees, with messengers again granting final approval.

In Phoenix, messengers approved the full slate of nominees presented by both the Committee on Committees and the Committee on Nominations.

The 2017 Committee on Committees reported that half of those elected to the 2018 Committee on Nominations were from churches with average worship attendance of 250 or less. An average worship attendance of 524 among churches of 2018 Committee on Nominations members was down from an average of 1,704 over the past five years.

Committee on Committees chairman Randy Davis, president and executive director of the Tennessee Baptist Mission Board in Nashville, said, "While we praise the Lord for our large megachurches that influence and impact so many, we understand that we need representation from our smaller churches."

Some 80% of next year's Committee on Nominations has never served in any national position within the SBC, Davis said.

The average Cooperative Program (CP) giving of churches who have members on the 2018 Committee on Nominations is 8.7% of undesignated receipts, Davis noted, "one of the highest numbers in years."

The 2017 Committee on Nominations nominated a slate of 80 Southern Baptists to fill vacant seats on SBC boards and committees. Chairman Richards noted average CP giving of the churches attended by newly elected board and committee members is seven percent of undesignated receipts.

All nominees presented by the Committee on Committees and the Committee on Nominations affirmed the Baptist Faith and Message prior to their election.

No doubt, most of you know that on Aug. 21 there will be a total eclipse of the sun. On that day, the moon will pass between us and the sun creating a 70-mile wide band of shade moving across the United States of America. It will begin over Salem, Or., at 10:16 a.m. PDT and conclude over Charleston, S.C., just before 3 p.m. EDT. Put a strip of tape across the U.S. map from Salem to Charleston and you will get a picture of its path. Though the sun will still be shining as brightly as ever, the moon will block its rays and darkness will reign for a while. It is an unusual, incredible scene that will affect all of us. The farther north you are in Mississippi, the more darkness you will experience. People all across our country, which occupies the northern and western hemispheres of Earth, are making plans to be directly in the path of the eclipse to view the moon blocking the sun.

In our spiritual hemisphere, Jesus the Son shines as brightly as ever today but His glory may get blocked by how we choose to live our lives. Sometimes it seems we come between Him and a world that needs Him. How is it possible that we can block so much of the brilliance of the life of Jesus that the world has a difficult time seeing through the darkness? Three thoughts come to mind.

■ **The first thought is hypocrisy.** A hypocrite is an actor playing a role, someone who is not really what they are presenting themselves to be. Hypocrisy in Scripture is seen in the lives of people who learned to play a role, to pretend, to



With Jim Futrel, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

When the sun goes dark

act as though they were something they really were not. Times have changed but the reality is that many people seem to just work the system, play the game, pretend. They are what they are not, and the power of God in Jesus Christ is void in their lives.

Hypocrisy, whether it is real or imagined, often hinders people from coming to Christ. It is not unusual to hear someone say, "The reason I don't go to church is because of the hypocrites," to which some people respond, "Well, I'd rather go to church with the hypocrites than die and go to hell with hypocrites." Maybe so, but the fact is that hypocrisy can be a dimming reality to a world that is already in darkness.

If you know Jesus Christ as your Savior and your heart's desire is to walk in the light as He is in the light, you are

sensitive to and fully aware that you are not perfect and that you too stumble and at times may fail or fall. That is the story of each of us to some degree but the fact is there are people who have put on the costume and pretend to be, and in so doing block the bright glory of Jesus from people who can't see through their hypocrisy.

■ **Another way to block His brilliance is through hate.** It is sad but true that sometimes Christians are better known for what they hate than what they love. Hate and the Christian life are hard to put together. Hate is a strong word. Scripture tells us we ought to hate sin because of what it does to individuals and families, and churches and communities. The old cliché is that we hate the sin but not the sinner, but truthfully there are Christians who talk

hatefully about people and sometimes about each other. It can be hard to distinguish whether their hatred is for the thing hurting a person or for the person himself/herself.

Hate is not a worthy objective when dealing with people. It robs us of compassion and sensitivity to the needs of those people. If hate becomes a dominant feature in your life, it will cast a darkness over your testimony and your love for Jesus, and it will be difficult for people to see the brilliance of His salvation through your eclipse of hate.

■ **A third way we cover up the Son is simply by hiding the light.** Jesus teaches us in the Sermon on the Mount, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16). Jesus pointed out that men don't light a candle and then put it under a basket. Rather, they set it in a place where all the light can shine throughout the room and push the darkness back (Matt. 5:15).

Maybe you've been hiding His light that is supposed to be shining through you. Maybe you keep it well hidden from your family, the folks with whom you work, and the people with whom you have social relationships.

Have you hidden the Son? Don't be a part of an eclipse of the spiritual needs of yourself and others. Let your light shine today. Don't block Christ's love from flowing through you.

The author can be contacted at directions@mbcb.org.

Vacation Bible School



The youth of LABELLE HAVEN CHURCH, OLIVE BRANCH, recently served at the church's VBS in June.



CALVARY CHURCH, VICKSBURG; led by Jessica and Jesse Tilton and the church's youth.

BIBL i O C I P H E R

WR ZC FYDKY MYCD HDM CBRIRVDIR

QRY XYE WIRCBRIY,CBXC CBIDMOB

CBZN QXY ZN LRXABRE MYCD HDM

CBR VDIOZPRYRNN DV NZYN.

XACN CBZICRRY: CBZICH-RZOB

Clue: O = G

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been coded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: John 3:16

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When you go jogging or "jalking" (halfway between a walk and a jog), on a farm-to-market paved road, you may not see a car for 30 minutes. Then you round a curve, and there is a vehicle on the side of the road. You look down the road and see another vehicle coming toward you. A third vehicle comes up behind. Both moving vehicles will meet at the parked vehicle at the same moment you are running around the parked vehicle. All four entities converge at the same point. Then you may not see another car for the next 30 minutes. I have coined this the "Law of Concurrence."

I don't know many big words, but when I know one, I try to use it (LOL). "Concurrence" means "a happening together in time or place."

The Law of Concurrence

We need to be mindful of the Law of Concurrence in our daily lives, but more especially in our Christian walk.

Now I realize the Law of Concurrence seems similar to the cliché, "When it rains, it pours." I understand Murphy's Law — "Anything that can go wrong, will go wrong, and at the worst possible time," but the Law of Concurrence is different. The Law of Concurrence is not necessarily negative or bad; it just happens.

When you try to enjoy your quiet time or your prayer time, the Law of Concurrence will occur. When you try to pray, you will remember

everything you should have done yesterday and everything that needs to be done right now, if not sooner.

The dog barks, the doorbell rings, the baby cries, and your spouse can't find the keys. Welcome to the Law of Concurrence.

When you try to witness to a lost person on a park bench, get ready for the Law of Concurrence. Everyone they know will walk by and greet them. Your phone and his phone will ring. His ride will arrive. It will begin to sprinkle. The noise of the traffic and the train will drown out the sirens of the fire trucks and ambulances.

No need to get frustrated or aggravated. It is what it is — the Law of Concurrence.

On that dream trip or get-a-way with your spouse and/or family, when you should enjoy the MOMENT to the fullest, watch out! The Law of Concurrence can rob you of both the moment and the memories.

In our ministries we go for years without a real crossroad and then, multiple choices face us. It is nice when the Law of Concurrence "dovetails" into one clear path.

As the "new" Executive Director of the Christian Action Commission, I am not sur-

prised at all that the "lottery" was front and center during my first Legislative Session. I believe the lottery will be an even greater threat during the upcoming session in 2018. Other critical issues will also arise concurrently. We need you to be prayed up and to speak up.

Many believe events happen in "3's." They also happen in "4's," "5's," and "6's." Be careful that you don't allow all the clutter and all the clutter to distract you from the focus of living life to the fullest. Learn to live with the Law of Concurrence.

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Judge: Christian photographer has right to choose

MADISON, Wisc. (BP and local reports) — A self-employed evangelical Christian photographer can choose to reject job requests based on her religious beliefs against same sex marriage, a Wisconsin county court and government officials have agreed.

Judge Richard Niess of the Dane County Circuit Court on Aug. 1 agreed to sign an order in the coming weeks signifying that city and state public accommodation laws do not apply to photographer and blogger Amy Lynn Lawson, the sole owner of Amy Lynn Photography Studio in Madison, the Wisconsin State Journal newspaper reported.

Lawson works on commission and does not have a physical storefront.

The ruling has no bearing on similar religious liberty cases involving two other business owners represented by Lawson's attorneys, Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), as those businesses are based outside Wisconsin.

Lawson filed suit against the City of Madison and the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development in March after a customer complained about a statement on Lawson's website refusing to photograph same sex weddings, according to ADF.

Such ceremonies counter Lawson's religious belief that

"Government officials must allow creative professionals without storefronts anywhere in the city and state the freedom to make their own decisions about which ideas they will use their artistic expression to promote."

Jonathan Scruggs

ADF Senior Counsel

marriage is between one man and one woman, Lawson said on her website. Photographing the same sex ceremonies would infringe upon her right to control her individual artistic expression, her web site states.

While Lawson was never sued nor charged with a crime, she feared the ramifications of the city and state laws and dropped the statement from her website. She began refusing all wedding photography requests, ADF wrote in a description of the case on its website.

The case has "huge implications for everyone within Wisconsin," ADF Senior Counsel Jonathan Scruggs said after the Aug. 1 hearing.

It means that government officials must allow creative professionals without store-



FREE TO CHOOSE — Self-employed photographer Amy Lawson, an evangelical Christian in Madison, Wisc., can choose to refuse jobs that violate her religious beliefs, a court and government officials have agreed. City and state public accommodation laws don't apply to her because she operates without a storefront, the officials said. (BP photo courtesy of Alliance Defending Freedom)

fronts anywhere in the city and state the freedom to make their own decisions about which ideas they will use their artistic expression to promote," Scruggs said in a press release.

"The court found — and the city and state have now agreed — that such professionals cannot be punished under public accommodation laws for exercising their artistic freedom because those laws simply don't apply to them."

of Masterpiece Cakeshop in Lakewood, Co., who is fighting for the right to refuse to design cakes for same-sex weddings.

The high court agreed in June to hear Phillips' case after the Colorado Supreme Court refused to overturn a lower court ruling against the baker.

The ADF has asked the high court to join Phillips' case with that of a second client, Washington florist Barronelle Stutzman, since the issues in their cases are identical. The Southern Baptist grandmother and owner of Arlene's Flowers in Richland, Wisc., was found guilty of unlawful discrimination against a longtime customer and his partner when she refused to create floral arrangements for the couple's homosexual commitment ceremony. Her assets are now in jeopardy of being seized by the state to satisfy judgments against her.

The latest decision in Phillips' case is a May 2014 ruling by the Colorado Civil Rights Commission. The ruling compels Phillips and his employees to design cakes for same-sex weddings, orders Phillips to re-educate his staff to comply with Colorado's Anti-Discrimination Act, and mandates quarterly compliance reports for two years, according to the ADF.

Just for the Record



TUCKERS CROSSING CHURCH, LAUREL, held Baby Dedication on Father's Day. Shown are Kerry and Sherree Walters with Se'omon and his siblings, Elizabeth and Eli Walters; Ben and Jaica Thomas with Ava and her brother Nathan; and Andrew and Carrie Tanner with William and his siblings Paisley and Penny Tanner. Eddie Bryant, pastor.



PUCKETT CHURCH, PUCKETT, held a GA dinner Mar. 30 for all current and past GA's. Tammy Anderson, guest speaker.



LUDLOW CHURCH, LUDLOW, ordained David Allen as deacon June 25. Shown are his wife Kathy, Allen, and pastor Jim Burns.



Sheila and Frankie Richardson, **SPRING HILL CHURCH, WATERFORD**, recently went on a mission trip to Manassas, Virginia.



Beau Williams and Maddox Williams represented **GILLSBURG CHURCH, GILLSBURG**, at Central Hills.



LINE CREEK CHURCH, MORTON, honored Tal Vardaman on his 10-year anniversary as pastor. He received a plaque and a church-wide dinner. Shown are his son Jared, wife Cindy, Vardaman, and Kent Pickett, deacon chairman.



MT. HOREB CHURCH, MERIDIAN, recently ordained Edward Smith as deacon. Shown are Smith, his wife Kelly, and pastor Jim Hutchison.



PINEVIEW CHURCH, LAUREL, recognized 90-year-old Charlie Allred for nine years of perfect Sunday School attendance July 23. Shown are Allred, left, and his Sunday School teacher Fred Bloodworth.



TOOMSUBA CHURCH, TOOMSUBA, held a backpack dedication and teacher appreciation service July 30 led by Steven Wade.



VALLEY GROVE CHURCH, PONTOTOC COUNTY, recently held a blessing of the backpacks service. Shown are church members circling students and school personnel in prayer. Greg Herndon, pastor.

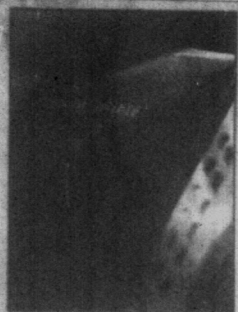
Just for the Record



PLEASANT HILL CHURCH, BOGUE CHITTO, sent 15 students and adults to the Hands of Hope Missions in Welch, W. Va., this summer. They worked with the Hope Chest and led a VBS while there. Kathy Wilson, mission team coordinator; Floyd Higginbotham, pastor.



Members of the Explorer's Bible Study at **FIRST CHURCH, BRANDON**, recently attended the Explorer's Summer Conference in Oxford. This year's study will begin Aug. 15 at the church, 9:30 - 11 a.m. on Tuesdays. The study is Corinthians, Ephesians, and Philippians, led by Rita Latham.



DR. JOHN SULLIVAN
SUN., AUG. 20-10:15 AM;
MON., AUG. 21-12:00 PM;
TUE., AUG. 22-12:00 PM



DR. ROBERT SMITH
SUN., AUG. 20-9:00 PM



DR. PHIL HOSKINS
MON., AUG. 21-9:00 PM



DR. JEFF LAMORE
TUE., AUG. 22-9:00 PM

Jones County Bible Conference AUGUST 20-22, 2017

MUSIC

Each evening session will be led by the conference choir combining the talents of each participating church.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

During each evening session, a Worship Service will be provided for all children K-6th Grade.

WIDOW'S SERVICES

12:00-1:00 PM at SHDC - Come when you can; leave when you must.

Salem Heights Baptist Church, 5830 Hwy. 84 W. Laurel, MS - 601-763-7571

ECLIPSE

cont. from p. 1

explains how creation reveals God and how salvation is available through Jesus Christ.

Church members will distribute the DVDs during the eclipse along with 3,000 evangelistic booklets. "If our parking lot is utilized for eclipse watchers, we will take that opportunity to try and share the Gospel," Mountain View pastor Buddy Hanson added.

In Lincoln, Ne., the launch of Hope City, a North American Mission Board church plant, is set to correspond with the eclipse. The congregation's first service is slated for Aug. 20. That day and during the eclipse, the church will distribute 2,000 "college survival kits" at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

"These kits will be filled with ramen noodles and Pop Tarts, as well as the book of John and some other Gospel-oriented things," said Hope City pastor Logan Merrick.

Missouri Baptists' news-journal The Pathway reported at least three Baptist churches in the Show-Me State are planning eclipse outreaches: Santa Fe Trail Church in Boonville, First Church in DeSoto, and Concord Church in Jefferson City.

Grand Oaks Baptist Assembly in Chillicothe, Mo., will host a Wonders of Creation Solar Eclipse Family Retreat on Aug. 20-21, that will include mini-golf, hiking, swimming, and an opportunity to learn about the eclipse from a Christian world-view perspective.

"Since we're in the range of the eclipse, we thought we were in a position to do teaching and ministry for families," Grand Oaks manager Don Boyer told The Pathway, adding that he hopes the event inaugurates an annual back-to-school retreat for families at the campground.

First Church in Hendersonville, Tn., a suburb of Nashville, is hearing "quite a buzz" in the community about the eclipse and is planning multiple outreach events, executive pastor Bruce Raley said.

"With projections of 250,000 or more people [moving] into our county - many from foreign countries - we wanted to be on the forefront of welcoming the guests," Raley said. "We will begin on Sunday evening, Aug. 20, with a concert featuring several Gospel Music Association artists as well as our own musicians."

"On Aug. 21, people are welcome to view the eclipse from our parking lots. Hot dogs and ice cream are available to the first several hundred to arrive. We have already handed out over 4,000 eclipse viewing glasses and have several hundred more for those needing them."

Beginning just after 10 a.m. local time in Oregon, the to-



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Solar Eclipse Eye Safety



Looking directly at the sun during a solar eclipse is unsafe, even during a brief phase when the moon briefly blocks the sun's bright face. This phase is called totality. The path of totality for the Aug. 21, 2017 eclipse stretches from Oregon to South Carolina. Unless you're in the path of totality, keep your solar eclipse glasses on throughout the eclipse. Four manufacturers have certified that their eclipse glasses and handheld solar viewers meet the standards for eye protection: Rainbow Symphony, American Paper Optics, Thousand Oaks Optical and TSE.

NOT SAFE

Ordinary sunglasses are not strong enough to protect your eyes.



SAFE

Use specially designed solar eclipse glasses and viewers to block the sun's harmful rays.



NOT SAFE

Wearing solar eclipse glasses to view through a camera, binoculars, or a telescope will not protect your eyes.



SAFE

Use only specially designed solar eclipse glasses and viewers.



tal eclipse will take approximately an hour and a half to pass over Oregon, Idaho, Wyoming, Montana, Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Illinois, Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina.

After the Aug. 27 eclipse, the next total solar eclipse will be in South America on July 2, 2019.

Eye health professional organizations are warning people that looking directly at the eclipse will result in permanent vision damage and possible blindness. Tips from the American Academy of Ophthalmology on how to safely view the eclipse can be found at www.aao.org/eye-health/tips-prevention/solar-eclipse-eye-safety.

Baptist Global Response marks 10th anniversary

NASHVILLE (BP) — Baptist Global Response (BGR) is celebrating its 10-year anniversary in a big way, with a campaign to raise \$100,000 for people in need across the globe.

Since 2007, the humanitarian aid organization has been partnering with Southern Baptist donors to fund disaster relief and community development projects around the world. BGR hopes to celebrate that milestone in August by raising \$10,000 for each year of service — a total of \$100,000.

While BGR is not a formal entity of the Southern Baptist Convention, it does heartily promote and endorse the SBC's giving channel, the Cooperative Program. BGR's partnership with Southern Baptists in meeting global human needs is fundamentally undergirded by those who give through their local churches to the Cooperative Program and to the Southern Baptist Global Hunger Relief fund.

"It's hard to believe that it has already been 10 years since we started BGR," said Jeff Palmer, BGR's chief executive officer. "It only seems like yesterday but when I think about the thousands of projects implemented worldwide and literally millions of lives impacted, I thank God for bringing about BGR and then letting us be a part of this amazing ministry."

The 10 for 10 Campaign will run through Aug. 31. Those who want to get in-

"It only seems like yesterday but when I think about the thousands of projects implemented worldwide and literally millions of lives impacted, I thank God for bringing about BGR and then letting us be a part of this amazing ministry."

Jeff Palmer

BGR chief executive officer

volved can find resources and fundraising ideas at gobgr.org/10for10/. On the site, BGR offers suggestions for donors such as selecting 10 items from the organization's gift catalog and organizing a group of 10 friends to give \$100 each.

Palmer says generosity from donors has made BGR's work possible and will continue to do so in the coming years.

"Whenever we've needed prayer coverage for the work, knees bowed," he said. "Whenever we've needed volunteers to go and help, hands and feet were willing, and when we've needed resources to place in the hands of our trusted partners for food, medicine, or shelter materials, pockets were open."

For more information about BGR or the 10 for 10 Campaign, visit gobgr.org.



PLANTING WITNESS — Two refugee women from Myanmar prepare their part of a four-acre garden spot on land provided by Antioch Church in Louisville, Ky. The church partners with the city to prepare the soil for multiple family groups to cultivate individual gardens each spring and summer. (BP photo)

Refugees encounter a good side of America — Christians

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP) — Ibrahim was clearly puzzled by the hospitality of the American Christians who had shown him such love and care during his short time in the United States.

"Why do you treat us better than our own people?" Ibrahim asked during a Thanksgiving meal last year hosted by Refuge Louisville, a ministry that equips local churches to minister to refugees.

To anyone who has heard Ibrahim's life story, the question made sense. Injured by a missile, he had been evacuated to a hospital in Jordan and pressed into a refugee camp, according to the Refuge blog. "We weren't looking to the future — we were just alive," Ibrahim said. But at Refuge Louisville he found a caring community of Christians who helped to welcome him into life in the United States.

Since last October, Refuge has worked with local churches from six denominations to mobilize more than 500 volunteers to support immigrants like Ibrahim. Emerging from the ministry of a Southern Baptist church plant five years ago, Refuge "exists to empower local churches to serve refugees and marginalized people in Louisville and beyond," according to the organization's mission statement.

Many of the refugees come from places where it's tough for missionaries enter. "We've all been trying to get into the 10/40 window forever," John Barnett, executive director at Refuge Louisville, said of the global regions where masses are unreached by the Gospel.

"What if God is sending the 10/40 window to us? Are we ready? That's what we're equipping the church to be prepared for."

Kentucky resettles twice the number of refugees per capita as the national average, according to a December 2016 Pew Report. It also

ranks in the top 10 among all states in resettled refugees per capita.

In 2015, 61% of refugees arriving in Kentucky resettled in Louisville. Refuge Louisville says the city has refugees representing 120 nationalities and who speak more than 100 different languages.

Refuge is located in the heart of an area with the three apartment complexes that house the largest number of refugees in Louisville. Antioch Church, founded by Todd Robertson, launched in the basement of one of the buildings in 2010. Though the church eventually moved, they realized it would be an ideal location to reach into the city's growing refugee population.

"The idea for us was always [that] the key to reaching the refugee community was the church," Robertson said. "We saw that building as a place that could be an incubator for new church plants, whether that be in what we were trying to do as a multi-ethnic congregation or whether it was through mono-ethnic, language-focused churches."

Robertson recently transitioned from Antioch to serve as director of missions for the Louisville Regional Baptist Association.

Barnett, a former 12-year missionary with the International Mission Board, describes Refuge Louisville as "intra-church" rather than para-church because the local church leads the effort.

"Everything we do comes out of the local church as an avenue to feed back into the local church," Barnett said. "That's why I call us intra-church. ...Normally a para-church would say no matter whether the local church gets involved, we're going to continue the mission."

"The church planter in me, the local church guy in me, says I'd rather not exist than do that."

Three major efforts are the primary focus of what Refuge Lou-

isville now does. First, they mobilize local church small groups of at least six people to serve as welcome teams for new refugees in a joint effort with area resettlement agencies.

The teams pick up the refugees at the airport, help set up their new apartments, and become a helpful resource and caring support during the refugee family's early days in the city. At the end of the three-month commitment, the groups throw a "milestone party" to celebrate the family's completion of a quarter of a year in the U.S.

"We're meeting a huge need for these resettlement agencies [by helping with the resettlement process]. They are over-run," Barnett said.

Secondly, Refuge matches partnering church members with refugees who have specific needs such as English classes, computer instruction, job search assistance, and in-home tutoring. When Refuge discovers a need, Barnett said, they go to the churches to check for volunteers.

"We never want to be a top-down organization," he said. "We want to serve from the bottom up. We want to help people discover their gifts. I can't tell you how many times we've had someone come for a few minutes and then they realize God wants them to use their gifts to minister to refugees."

Thirdly, Refuge provides churches with opportunities to immerse future church leaders and cross-cultural workers in an international context. In a year-long immersion program, leaders are encouraged to move into a refugee community to engage refugees with Gospel-focused relationships, be trained in cross-cultural ministry, deepen their relationship with God and learn to work in a team setting.



EXCITING ARRIVAL — A woman expresses joy when Baptist Global Response arrives to distribute bags of seed in her village in Lesotho, a land-locked kingdom surrounded on all sides by South Africa. (BP photo)

Revivals & Homecomings

► **Lorena Church, Smith County:** Homecoming, Aug. 13, 11 a.m., followed by lunch and afternoon singing.

► **Lantrip Church, Bruce:** Revival, Aug. 13-16: Sun., 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Will Turner, Kenny Robertson, Al Gaspard, and Jon Hood, speakers; Bill Bailey, music; DeAnna Wooten, pianist; Robert Earl Alexander, pastor.

► **Liberty Church, Kemper County:** 175th anniversary, Aug. 13; cemetery tour, 9 a.m., followed by meet and greet, church building tour and slide show, congregational and choir singing, welcome and announcements, recognition of guests and proclamations, music, comments from former pastors, and message;

lunch, noon, followed by time capsule dedication and balloon release.

► **Magee's Creek Church, Walthall County:** 44th annual homecoming, Aug. 13; fellowship, 10:30 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m., followed by lunch and afternoon singing with The Dunaways; Tommy King, speaker; Pat Bourg, pastor.

► **New Home Church, Smith County:** Homecoming, Aug. 13; services, 11 a.m., followed by potluck lunch and 2 p.m., featuring Beyond Blessed gospel group; Keith Gordon, speaker; cemetery offering taken.

► **Fellowship Church, Ellisville:** 169th homecoming, Aug. 13; services, 10 a.m., followed by covered dish luncheon; Mission at the Cross leading worship.

National survey reflects mixed opinions on Baptist associations

PIKEVILLE, Ky. (BP) — Most church leaders believe their financial contributions to local Baptist associations are "a good kingdom investment" while others are struggling to see their relevancy, according to findings from a national survey released July 31.

"When asked to describe the most exciting aspect of their local Baptist association, the most popular answer among church leaders was 'nothing,'" said Jason J. Lowe, a Kentucky director of missions who led the study that looked into attitudes about the work of local Baptist associations.

Lowe, who serves the Pike Association of Southern Baptists in eastern Kentucky, said the findings weren't all doom and gloom. "The most encouraging finding is that there is hope among church leaders that associations can be relevant once again."

Lowe said in a 208-page report that some church leaders are questioning whether local Baptist associations are still vital or even relevant.

"I personally believe that Baptist associations can still be a relevant ministry partner to the

local church," Lowe said. "However, I recognize that not everyone shares that opinion."

The survey, which allowed respondents to remain anonymous, was conducted in April to gain a better understanding of how Southern Baptist church leaders view the effectiveness of the associations. The survey consisted of two sets of questions for church leaders and association leaders.

Over the course of a two-week period, 448 responded to the survey. Of those, 159 were senior pastors and 116 were directors of missions. The remainder were largely church staff members, lay members, denominational or agency staff members, seminary students, and church planters.

Lowe said perhaps the most significant finding was the perceived lack of value in associations.

"Only 65.6% of church leaders think that their local Baptist association is a strategic partner in helping their church to fulfill the Great Commission, meaning that nearly one out of every three church leaders do not think so," according to the report.

"Only 58.5% of church leaders think that their church would be negatively affected if their local Baptist association ceased to exist," the report states.

However, 73.8% of church leaders think that their local Baptist association is a good kingdom

investment of their church's financial resources.

Lowe said the churches that are most involved in the work of local Baptist associations and are most familiar with their mission and work are the most excited about their work. More than 90% of church leaders who are extremely involved in the work of the associations believed they were strategic partners in fulfilling the Great Commission.

Ninety percent of church leaders extremely involved in the work of the local associations said they would be negatively affected if their local Baptist associations ceased to exist, and more than 90% of church leaders most involved in the work of local associations said they believed contributing financially was good kingdom investment.

"The research showed that most church leaders do believe that associations can have a future," Lowe said. "That is, if significant changes are made."

Church leaders said they'd be motivated to increase their financial support for local Baptist associations if they could demonstrate their relevance with a clear vision and strategy.

For more information on the survey, go to jasonlowe.com/2017/07/30/2017-baptist-associations-survey-results/.

MS POSITIONS

CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH IN NORTH CENTRAL MS IS SEEKING A FULL TIME PASTOR. The church is located in the outskirts of Greenwood, close to the Carroll/Leflore County line. Benefits include a parsonage and GuideStone retirement contributions. Send resume to Roy Smith, Calvary Baptist Church, 4644 Billy Stone Rd, Greenwood, MS 38930 or email to cbcgreenwood@belsouth.net

MEADOW BROOK BAPTIST CHURCH IN DESOTO COUNTY IS SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL YOUTH MINISTER. The church is within commuting distance of Mid-America Seminary. Benefits include a parsonage, education assistance and GuideStone retirement contributions. Send resume to Oscar Geeslin, Meadow Brook Baptist Church, 3115 Old Pigeon Road, Byhalia, MS 38611 or email to ltaylor1@centurytel.net

GUM SPRINGS CHURCH, BRAXTON,

MISSISSIPPI SEEKS PIANIST to serve during Sunday morning and evening worship, and Sunday morning choir practice. Please submit resume to the Pianist Search Committee c/o Music Director, 121 Victoria Pl, Brandon, Mississippi 39042, or email to jmanderson1575@gmail.com

BIG LEVEL BAPTIST CHURCH IN WIGGINS, MS IS SEEKING A FULL TIME PASTOR. Resumes may be emailed to samuel@abrittonaccounting.com or mailed to Big Level Baptist Church Attn: Search Committee 1346 City Bridge Rd. Wiggins, MS 39577.

LIBERTY BAPTIST CHURCH IN LIBERTY, MS IS ACCEPTING RESUMES FOR A MINISTER OF MUSIC AND A PART-TIME YOUTH MINISTER. Resumes may be sent to Liberty Baptist Church, c/o Bradley Geno, PO Box 73, Liberty, MS 39645 or emailed to bgeno@libertybaptistchurch.biz.

CLASSIFIEDS

OUR CHURCH, NEW HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH, HAS A HAMMOND ORGAN FOR SALE, asking \$3,500. For more information call Mary Carpenter at 601-508-4064.

THERE IS AN OPENING FOR A DIRECTOR OF MISSIONS FOR NORTH CENTRAL BAPTIST ASSOCIATION (JACKSON AND WINN PARISHES), LOUISIANA. Resumes can be mailed to North Central Baptist Association Office and Personnel Committee, P.O. Box 159, Jonesboro, LA 71251. Resumes will be accepted until August 21.

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First Person: What makes a real man?

By Adam Groza
Correspondent

ESPN, the sports cable channel, recently published a story in

which Kansas State University offensive tackle Scott Frantz identified himself as homosexual. CNN, the news cable channel, quickly seized upon the story,

prognosticating that the NFL would soon have its first openly homosexual player.

The media was similarly entranced with Michael Sam, who became the first openly homosexual man ever drafted by the National Football League (NFL) in 2014.

Clearly, those who seek to normalize homosexuality see a homosexual man playing in the NFL as the next *Obergefell v. Hodges*, the 2015 Supreme Court ruling legalizing same-sex marriage which constituted a significant step toward the normalization and acceptance of homosexuality.

An openly homosexual NFL player would be seen as a cul-

tural victory — a Jackie Robinson moment for those who, wrongly, equate the homosexual rights movement with the civil rights movement.

Stereotypes of American manhood are heavily influenced by the NFL. "Real men" are big, tough, and muscular. The quintessential American man is exemplified by the likes of Joe Montana, Russell Wilson, and Bo Jackson. He takes hits and keeps going. If a homosexual man plays in the NFL, the message is clear: Homosexual men are "real men."

How should Christians respond? Perhaps, surprisingly, Christians should be unmoved. Openly homosexual men will undoubtedly be successful and appreciated in the NFL just as they are in a variety of other vocations.

The real battle that should concern Christians is not the NFL, but cultural assumptions regarding manhood. For too long, Christians have allowed culture to unduly influence our views of manhood. This latest news about the NFL is a good time for Christians to assert a biblical view of what it means to be a "real man."

Hint: It has nothing to do with a football.

Biblical manhood is first and foremost about fearing God,

and not about inspiring fear in other men (Proverbs 1:7, 1 Timothy 5:8, Romans 13:1-7, Ephesians 5:25).

Biblical manhood is not measured in rushing yards and passing percentage but in love, service, and holiness. The end zone of biblical manhood is faithfulness to Jesus and His local church. Half of Bible men are faithful to their wives, provide for their families, and finish the race. Biblical men only resort to acts of violence when life and liberty are on the line, not for adulation or entertainment.

Of course, it is possible to play football and embrace biblical manhood. The two are not mutually exclusive. Nevertheless, where there are conflicting versions of masculinity, Christians should take notice and remain faithful to Scripture.

Homosexual men playing in the NFL may cloud the cultural picture of manhood, but not the biblical picture.

Groza is vice president of enrollment services and associate professor of philosophy at Gateway Seminary of the Southern Baptist Convention in Ontario, Ca., in the Los Angeles area. Edited for style and clarity.

SUPER

cont. from p. 1

growth, and to help develop youth leadership in Mississippi churches.

Prospective students are closely screened, then immersed in a progressive learning system at Super Summer that ensures they are growing deeper and being challenged each year they attend.

Ken Hall, consultant in the MBCB Discipleship and Family Ministry Department, said, "We funnel students into schools based on age and experience. It's a five-year plan, but you can come in at any point. Even if a student has just graduated they come into a first-year school, but that particular school is designed to hit the high points of all five previous years."

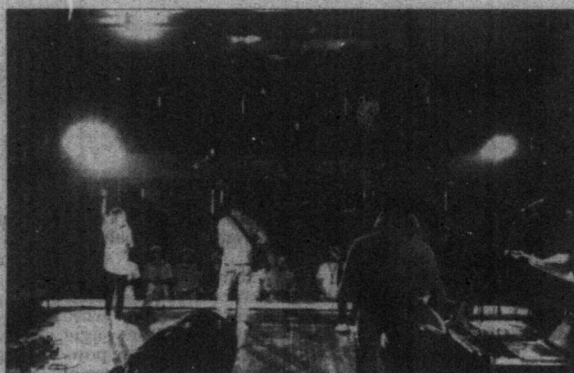
"For instance, in the past in the fifth-year school — named the purple school — the rate of return wasn't all that great. Now, our rate of return is a lot greater. A lot of our kids set the goal of attending purple school. We had about 90 kids this year."

Each school at Super Summer is identified by a color. First-year students study basic discipleship issues. The exception is older first-year students, understanding that their return rate is lower and that their need for exposure to big issues is greater.

Second-year students get introduced to worldview, different beliefs, and character issues. Third-year students focus the entire week on becoming a leader in all areas of their lives. Fourth-year students concentrate on worldview for the week.

Fifth-year students spend the week reviewing and refining what they have learned over the past four years and are also moved into action as they spend portions of their week in ministry.

"Purple School students spend part of their time in inner city Jackson," Hall said.



WORSHIP — Students at Super Summer are led in music and praise during one of the worship services during the course of the conference July 17 – 21. (Special)

"They do ministry projects. It's a neat concept."

"We call it a Christian leadership conference," Hall continued. "We rely on individual churches to send their leadership kids. It is not for everyone. We rely on the integrity of the churches."

"Most churches work really hard to help their kids understand what this conference is. There's very little free time. Very little recreation. It's pretty much study and worship and family group time — and these kids eat it up."

"We have ten or eleven basic requirements we expect each kid to have done. It's not that kids are just trying to check off a list. This is for kids who, all year round, are seeking to be committed followers of Jesus Christ and are going beyond just the normal Christian in the pew."

"We have attendance requirements. They're expected to attend 75% of youth and church activities. They are to have memorized at least ten new Scripture verses a year. They are to have shared their faith with at least one person."

"They need to be involved in a Christian club or Bible study on campus — FCA or whatever. They have to be part of a discipleship group during the year, and have two references outside their church family testify to their character. Above first year students, they have to write a short essay. We are looking for kids already involved in these daily practices."

Hall stressed that Super Summer participants are not better than other Christian young people in Mississippi, nor is the intent of the week-long camp to build some sort of "spiritual elite."

"These kids have worked hard," he said. "They want to make sure they can be a part of this. About half the kids who come are put in a school and they don't know anyone in it, especially that first year, but the community that's built through Super Summer and their family groups is so encouraging to them."

"They realize this state is full of students like them. Now, through social media, they really can keep up with each other."

For more information, visit mssupersummer.com.

ROYCE

cont. from p. 1

Paul G. Moak Jr., chairman of the Clinton-based Christian university's board of trustees, wrote in an Aug. 7 statement to trustees that the remainder of Royce's time at MC will be spent on marking the school's accomplishments under his leadership.

"It is incumbent for each of us to do our best to make this final year for Dr. Royce his very best year. It is a time for celebrating his time at Mississippi College and the impact his leadership has had on so many students as well as the MC family and community."

"This is the time to give thanks for Dr. Royce and his wife Rhoda (whose many contributions often go unrecognized), for the tremendous commitment they have made to the Mississippi College family," Moak wrote.

Royce holds three degrees including a doctorate from Vanderbilt University in Nashville. Prior to accepting the top MC position, he was president of Baptist-affiliated Anderson College in South Carolina.

During his tenure, enrollment at MC mushroomed from 3,200 to nearly 5,200. The 191-year-old school's endowment rose from \$36.7 million to \$75.5 million, and faculty increased by 38%. The sports program at MC advanced from NCAA Division III to Division II and the school rejoined the Gulf South Conference.

Over 1,100 MC students made first-time professions of faith in Christ during Royce's time on campus, records indicate.

Royce was named Clinton's Outstanding Citizen of the Year in 2011, and was chosen for the 2014 Chief Executive Leadership Award for District III by the international Council for the Advancement and Support of Education headquartered in Washington, D.C.

"He's truly an authentic Christian gentleman whose leadership abilities are unsurpassed in terms of encouraging others, from students to faculty and staff," said Ron Howard, MC vice president for academic affairs.

The Royces plan to settle close to their son Mark in northern Virginia.

Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published.

Preferred method: news may be submitted electronically to the e-mail address below, and must be included in the message segment of an e-mail form. Secondary method: news may be typewritten or neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper and mailed. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone. Due to ever-present virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments in JPEG format are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs must be submitted electronically via e-mail, as attachments in JPEG format. **Hard copy photographs mailed through the postal service will not be accepted.** Photographs must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. Photographs containing inappropriate gestures and objectionable clothing will not be published. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items that do not reproduce well on newsprint are generally not publishable.

There is no guarantee that news items and/or photographs will be published, and unsolicited material will not be acknowledged or returned. All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date. Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive.

Submit news to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. Email: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

Truth is not relative.

Find it in the One who is the way, truth, and life.

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1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life.

From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

The Cleansing • Psalm 32

Ask Adam and Eve about their "Fig Leaf Futility" clothing line. As soon as that serpent slipped into the Garden of Eden and began to slither and writhe and hiss and whisper those dreadful lies about the Word and command of God, they should have put down that forbidden fruit and immediately ordered matching, tailor-made snake skin outfits. Sin cannot be hidden or covered up. God's plan has always been to cover over and cleanse our confessed sins with a blood sacrifice. The blood of the innocent animal slain by God to make coverings for Adam and Eve was a fore-shadowing of the cross of Jesus.

Review: Psalm 51 (last Sunday) and today's Psalm 32 stand as "before and after" portraits of restoration after confession and repentance. In introductory notes, both Psalms are credited to David as author. Both Psalms fall under the heading of "penitential" or the expression of deep, abiding SORROW over sin accompanied by confession and repentance, turning from that sin. Deep, abiding joyful RELIEF comes from the release of that burden of sin. A broken, crushed, contrite, repentant, forgiven sinner will once again be able to walk in the blessedness of an intimate relationship with the Lord.

Of all earthly kings, David certainly knew better than to attempt to hide

his sins or even to commit them in the first place! This seasoned, victorious battle commander had allowed his mighty men to ride off into the fray without his leadership. A casual, wandering glance turns into a lustful, willful act of adultery which leads to the arranged murder of a faithful husband and loyal soldier. Time passes (approximately one year!) as one evil deed follows another. Then, David's string of deception unravels with a God-ordained visit from Nathan, the prophet of God.

Confession (agreement with God about the presence of sin) is made.

Repentance (deliberate turning away from sin) is evident. Restoration (returning and renewing) of David's relationship to the Lord is accomplished by the forgiveness and grace of His loving Lord. Psalm 32 describes the entire process of events.

This Psalm describes sin using four distinct words. "Transgression" is willful, knowing rebellion. "Sin" is missing the established mark of holiness. "Iniquity" is crooked,

twisted perversion of truth. "Deceit" describes lies and treachery. David easily qualified as guilty of all shades of sinfulness.

His opening statement is a showcase for the blessedness of being forgiven. The burden of sin is "lifted away" with the strength of forgiveness. The weight of sin is "overwhelmed" with the power of forgiveness. The crookedness of sin is "straightened" and erased from the ledger books with the calculation

of forgiveness. The deceit of sin is "exposed" by the search light of forgiveness.

Hidden sin destroys from the inside out.

Wasting. Groaning. Heaviness. Draining away. Sin destroys not only spiritually but physically. David had no inner peace. The conviction of the Holy Spirit is the weight (wait?!) of grace as God calls us back to Himself. Restoration is God's desire.

Acknowledging sin is confession of wrongdoing. We agree with God that sin is heinous. Confession is prompted by our own personal guilt before God. Only we can confess. Only God

can forgive. God does not want to abandon us to our own sinfulness. God is holy and cannot abide sin. God is merciful, but God is a God of justice. God is holy. God does the calling. We must do the answering by turning toward God and away from our sins. In verse 6, David implores us to pray for forgiveness as soon as God calls. Don't wait until you are desperate. Confess and repent now. The weight of sin is too heavy! God is our hiding place. We should hide IN God...hiding FROM God is not possible. God is our preservation and our song of deliverance.

In verse 7, the scene shifts. God speaks to David. The wide chasm between David and His God has been closed. They are once again eye to eye, face to face, heart to heart. Like a horse (brashly bolting away) or a mule (stubbornly refusing to move), David has learned to navigate according to God's command, responding to the first gentle tug on the reins. Rather than being caught, tethered and led around, David has determined to follow willingly. The man after God's own heart has returned to The Maker of his heart. The wicked are sorrowful. The upright shout for joy.

Brown is staff evangelist, First Church, Richland.



Explore the Bible

with Becky Brown

A Channel of Comfort • 2 Corinthians 1:2-7

John 14:26 contains one of the most enduring words that can be read by human eyes. Depending on your Bible version, the word Advocate (NIV), Helper (ESV), Counselor (HCSB) or Comforter (KJV) all are defined the same way: aid. Jesus is promising that once He is no longer on the scene that His followers will have all the aid, help and resources they need to do what He has charged them to do in the person of the Holy Spirit, i.e., the Comforter.

The exact same word is used by Paul in today's text. Ten times in five verses Paul uses the word meaning comfort or aid. Does this seem like overkill? Not to Paul because he knew the issues facing this young church family. He knew they had sins, questions and quarrels. What these people needed was aid, which drives the introduction to this letter. It would be one thing to place their need for comfort within the chapters that follow but Paul is introducing this focal point within the first words of his letter. Aid, help and comfort are needed by these believers. It is of utmost importance to Paul that they realize that truth first and foremost.

Comfort Defined vs. 2-3

We know that the word comfort means to console. Paul knew this but he also knew the work of the Holy Spirit. Paul was a limited man in that he

could only do the work of one man. The Holy Spirit can do much more. Greater consolation to the larger church at Corinth simultaneously could only be the work of God. Note that Paul refers to God as the 'God of all comfort' (vs. 3) meaning there is nothing that you will face that God does not have aid in store to give. He also describes God as the 'Father of all compassion' (vs. 3). I have found much relief in knowing that the word 'passion' at its heart means suffering, hence Easter is often referred to as Passion Week. To add 'com-' to that word can only mean that whatever it is that might be suffered through in this life, the believer will not suffer it alone. We have company in our dark days. There is relief close by in the person of the Father of all compassion.

Comfort Channeled vs. 4-5

What have you faced in life? What passionate sufferings have disrupted your peace? Why is it that you are fac-

ing what you are at this moment? Paul would answer by saying so that you can comfort someone facing the same issues. God comforts us in trials so that we may return the favor later (vs. 4). This is not to be misunderstood as a divine paying it forward mentality. Believers have been charged to introduce and glorify God in the comfort

we give and the comfort we give has eternal significance. We are never to live from point A to point B. The goal of our comfort

is to live from point A to Heaven. Our comforting of others has eternity as its end.

Comfort Lived vs. 6-7

We know that Paul understood suffering. (2 Cor. 11:16-33) He was a man that at times needed comfort. It was because of those suffering times that he could now thrust the spotlight on the God of all comfort. He was writing to the Corinthians as an experienced person. Paul claims his affliction (vs. 6 KJV) or distress (ESV) is for the

good of the church. Distressed furniture are those pieces in our homes that are made to look rustic and used. Paul knew that the harsh times that he faced could be used to warn and strengthen other believers. This must be our stance as well.

Live it Out

Again, what have you faced in your life? There are countless stories of hardships throughout the readers of this article. Paul's hope was that the readers in Corinth would use their stories to comfort and encourage others. Believers are not immune to the harsh world we live in. Suffering will come. Use your sufferings to strengthen others by pointing them to the God of all comfort.

As a small group, look for that single parent or widow in community that needs help. Identify people beyond your community that need encouragement as in a missionary family that you can adopt in prayer and support. Let your pastor know of your willingness to share the comfort that God has brought to you during hardship with the larger church.

Anthony is director of the Collaborative Missionary Network, Oxford/Holly Springs.

Bible Studies for Life

with Clay Anthony



LifeWay Research: missing money is ministry lost

NASHVILLE (BP) — Churches and other faith groups collect tens of billions of donations each year, and some of the money unfortunately goes missing.

About one in 10 Protestant churches has had someone embezzle funds, according to a survey of 1,000 Protestant senior pastors released Aug. 3 by LifeWay Research, a division of Nashville-based LifeWay Christian Resources that serves as an evangelical research firm specializing in surveys about faith in culture and matters that affect churches.

That figure isn't surprising, said Scott McConnell, executive director of LifeWay Research, because most churches rely on volunteers to handle their finances.

Those volunteers are usually honest but churches often lack systems to catch those who aren't, McConnell said. As a result, money that could have been used for ministry goes missing.

"Churches run on trust but they also know people are imperfect and can be tempted," McConnell said. "That's why safeguarding a church's finances is an important part of ministry."

Overall, nine percent of pastors say their church has had funds embezzled. Ninety-one percent say they are not aware of any embezzlement.

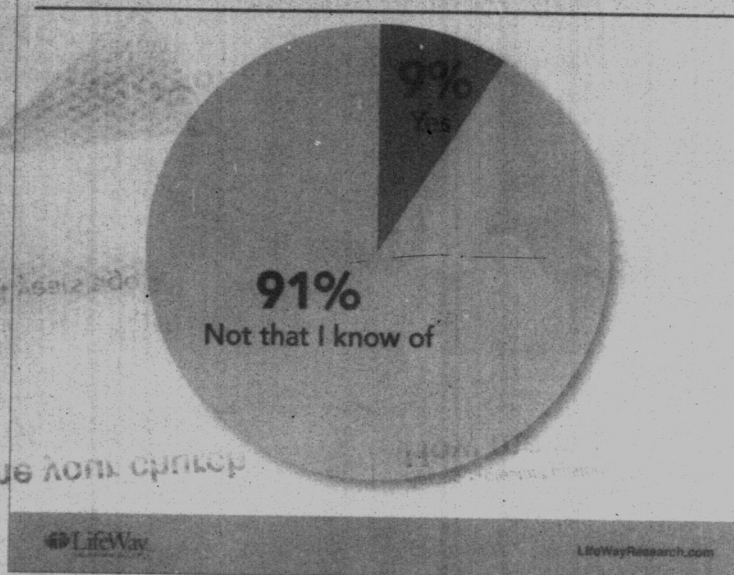
Churches of Christ ministers are more likely to say their church had funds embezzled (16%) when compared to Baptist (seven percent) or Presbyterian/Reformed pastors (six percent). Pastors of mid-sized churches — those with between 100 and 249 members — are less likely to say funds had been embezzled (six percent) than those with 250 or more members (12%).

LifeWay Research's survey echoes a smaller 2012 study published in *Fraud Magazine* of churches in Kansas and Missouri, which found 13.4% of churches there had experienced embezzlement or other fraud.

A study of more than 2,400 fraud cases at businesses and nonprofits by

Among Protestant pastors:

Has anyone ever embezzled funds from your current church, either before you were pastor or since you arrived?



the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners found 2.4% of cases involved churches or other charitable groups. The average loss was \$82,000.

As part of the LifeWay Research study, researchers asked pastors when their church's financial books were last audited and how much cash they had in reserves. Forty-seven percent of pastors say their church has had a complete audit in the last year. Two-thirds say their church's books have been audited within the last four years.

Thirty-four percent say the most recent audit was more than five years ago, their books haven't ever been audited (10%), or they don't know when their church last had an audit (14%). Among other findings:

■ Methodist pastors are most likely (74%) to say their church had a complete audit within the last year.

■ Baptist (17%) and Pentecostal (18%) pastors are more likely to say their church had a complete audit more than five years ago. Lutheran

(three percent), Methodist (four percent) and Holiness pastors (four percent) are less likely.

■ Church of Christ (16%) and Pentecostal pastors (17%) are more likely than pastors of other denominations to say their church has never been audited. Lutheran (five percent), Methodist (two percent) and Presbyterian/Reformed pastors (seven percent) are less likely to say the same.

■ African-American pastors (25%) are the most likely ethnic group to say their church has never had an audit.

Most churches realize having an audit can be good thing, McConnell noted. It's another aspect of being a good steward of a church's finances. "It's helpful to have a second set of eyes look at the church books," he said.

LifeWay Research found that a number of churches function with little margin for error when it comes to their finances.

Twenty-six percent have operating reserves to cover seven or fewer weeks, according to their pastors. A similar number (24%) have between eight and 15 weeks. Fifteen percent have between 16 and 25 weeks of reserves, while 12% have between 26 and 51 weeks. Twenty-three percent have a year or more.

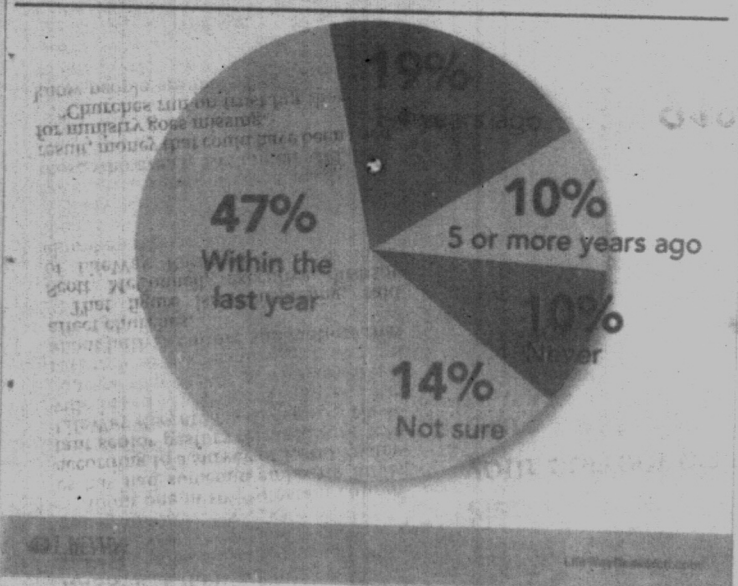
Smaller churches often have more weeks of reserves than larger congregations. Among small churches — those with fewer than 50 people — 27% say they have a year of cash reserves. By contrast, 15% of larger churches — those with more than 250 people — have a year of reserves.

An earlier study by LifeWay Research found about a third of churches have struggled to make their budget, McConnell said, so it's not surprising that some churches have few reserves.

"It takes a lot of faith to run a church, especially when finances are tight," he said, "but some churches may be missing out on ministry because there's not enough money in the bank to respond to needs and opportunities that arise."

Among Protestant pastors:

When was the last time your church had a complete audit of its finances?



Among Protestant pastors:

How many weeks of cash reserves does your church currently have?

